But in order to defend the family and its women from the male world, the women's behaviour has to be controlled, so that they will not destroy male honour by contacting men from the outside world. The high mud walls surrounding the house and compound is the physical expression of the institution of *purdah*, the seclusion and veiling of the women of the household from the 'public' male world. The concept of house (*kor*) is the essential realization of *purdah* since it defines the proper place of women as being within its walls or those of the compound (*kala*) behind which no men other than close relatives are ever allowed. If the women leave the house and go outside, for example on visits, they are protected by the veil (*chaderi*) or the head-shawl (*saruka*).

However, *purdah* is Janus-faced. It can be seen both as a 'symbolic shelter'[10] of the family's women and thus of the family honour, but also as a mechanism of controlling the women, for the same purpose. Its Janus-nature is closely connected with the basic asymmetry of sexes in the whole Pakhtun ideology and social structures. Men in the outer, 'public', sphere have to demonstrate protection and control of the women belonging to the 'domestic sphere' - and, on the other hand, women have to be controlled physically since they can not always be trusted to protect the family honour of their own will, and, more generally, women are considered as deficient of social reason to such a degree as to being unable to control their physical nature, first of all their sexual urges.

No wonder, then, that violations of honour, as well as offences against *purdah*, are met with severe sanctions.

The Life of Pakhtun Women

When a boy is born the event is celebrated with gun-salutes and feasting. If, on the other hand, the baby is a girl, the event is quiet. The parents hope for better luck next time, unless they already have a number of sons. Throughout the whole period of growing up the girl is taught to respect and obey men - the men in the family, even including her younger brothers. She is socialized into being a *Pukhtanā* in the full sense of the word - the female role with its various tasks, and the concepts of *purdah*, honour, and shame. In actual life *shame* (*sharm*) is much more explicitly stressed than *honour* (honour in general: *nang*, family honour: *namus*), since honour is a condition of existence normally more or less taken for granted, while shame implied the destruction of honour through deviant behaviour.

The little girls are taught their future tasks by demonstration and by helping their mother and the other women in the family from a very early age. Tiny girls of three play at fetching water with an empty tin on the head and try to wear pieces of cloth as head-shawls the way they see older girls and adult women do. As for formal schooling, there were at the time of my fieldwork a few primary village schools open to girls in the Kunar area. However, relatively few parents wanted to or could afford to send their girls to school. Only a few of the daughters of the most wealthy and progressive families were allowed to continue beyond primary school.

At the age of 10 or 11, the girls start to observe *purdah*, and from then on there is no more playing about in the village; and in most cases, no more going to school. The young girls are kept in the house and the courtyard in order to be protected from slander and shame through possible contact with young men. They work in the household, but like adult women they do not leave the house until dusk in order to fetch water - if at all. Like the rest of women's actual work, this is something that depends very much on the class position of the household, as well as on the composition of labour it can dispose of at any given moment of its development cyclus.

As previously mentioned, women's work basically consists of the tasks that are compatible with *purdah*. The tasks are mainly the preparing of food and bread (*dodaei*) (bread is made daily); preparation of curds (*qrut*) and sour-milk (*shurumbe*); washing dishes, washing and sewing clothes, cleaning the house, tending the vegetable garden within the *kala*, looking after the chickens, the sheep or the cows - and of course tending the children and bringing them up.

Hospitality (*melmastia*) plays a very great role in the Pakhtun world. Consequently the women's cooking of food for the guests that their menfolk entertain outside in the garden or in the guest-house (*hujra*) is extremely important to the men's reputation in the 'public' world.

The tasks that involve leaving the house - such as the fetching of water, firewood, and vegetables for cooking, helping the men in the fields, especially by weeding, and shopping, are avoided by adult women, or they are done as inconspicuously as possible. Shopping is nearly always done by the men; or a small girl or boy is sent on errands to the local shop. Only in the families of small landowners and tenants who have to rely on their own labour-power, would it be necessary for adult women to perform such outside tasks.

But in households that can afford to keep their women inside the house, and thus to keep them in strict *purdah* by having the outside jobs done by others, the women are exclusively occupied by domestic tasks in the *kala*. However,

since these households are usually much larger than those of tenants and small farmers, the women of the wealthier families do not have much leisure either. They are occupied with domestic tasks from early morning till nightfall. These households will mostly be those of landowners who have tenants and tenants' wives to do the outdoor chores, like fetching water and firewood and working in the fields, as part of the tenancy contract. The tenants' wives also have to help with the heavier household chores within the landowner's house, such as making bread, washing clothes and dishes, sweeping, and taking care of babies. This kind of unpaid work for the landowner on the part of the tenant family is called *begar* and is extremely unpopular among the tenants, precisely because it makes it impossible for their women to observe *purdah*. Although the situation in Kunar is one where land for tenancy is quite scarce due to population pressure, men will occasionally refuse a tenancy if the landowner requests that their wives work in his *kala*.

Girls are usually married at the age of 14-16. At the wedding they move into the groom's household, where Mother-in-law (*kwarkhe*) is in command. As the youngest and the most newly-arrived member of the women's group, the bride is often placed in a humiliating and exploited position. She will often have to do the heaviest and most unpleasant chores such as making the bread, which means that she has to sit for about an hour every day in the hottest period at noon, bent over the hot and smoky oven. (The oven, *tandur,* is shaped as a large clay pot placed vertically with the opening upwards. In order to cook the bread one has to put the arm into the oven that has been heated with burning wood, to stick the flat loaves on to the inside of the oven - taking care not to drop them in the ashes).

Gradually, and notably after the birth of her first son, the position of the young married woman in her husband's family becomes more secure, and she gains more respect in the women's group. The climax of her marital career is the period when she herself becomes a mother-in-law and gets her own daughters-in-law to do the heavy work for her. But as she grows older and weaker, she again slips into the background. If she is widowed, she is dependent on her grown-up sons to secure her last days.

During her entire life, a woman is subject to the tensions and conflict potentials inherent in the sets of roles of the women's group. These possible role-relations are: between co-wives (*bəne*)- *bəne* are always enemies, it is stated as part of the Pakhtun 'conventional wisdom'*;* mother (*mor*)/ daughter (*lur*)*;* sisters (*xor*, pl. *xoriende*)*;* unmarried daughters of the household/sisters-in-law (*vrandar*)*;*mother-

in-law/daughter-in-law (*nungor*); and between sisters-in-law and their respective children. Normally the relations between the female members of a household are peaceful and co-operative in the daily tasks. The atmosphere of a domestic group of Pakhtun women is usually extremely harmonious and pleasant, with the women assisting each other and taking care of each other's babies without being asked. But underneath lie the potential tensions that result from the women's roles in relation to each other, and ultimately from their relations to the men of the household. Since the women are all dependent on the men, especially the household head, the favour of the men is a scarce resource and an object of competition. To have good relations to the household head or one of the adult sons of the family means material rewards for oneself and one's children, prestige and influence in the domestic group, and not least important: better access to information from the men's outer world, and better possibilities of influencing decisions in that world by exerting pressure on the man.

In this domestic pattern of competition despite co-operation a very common female weapon is magic (*djardu*). Women use amulets (*kode* in Pakhtu, *tavez* in Persian) to cast a spell on a husband who neglects them in favour of a co-wife, or on the rival co-wife to make her lose the favour of the husband and the other family members. The *kode* slips of paper with the names of the implicated persons, the names of their parents, and some Koranic inscriptions, are folded together many times and carefully bound with thread. Sometimes they are to be dipped into the husband's tea, or hung up over the door through which he is to pass, put under his sleeping-mattress, or burnt in the cooking-fire. Some *kode* are to be worn by the woman herself. Such amulets are often acquired from the *hindu*, the Hindus and Sikhs of the larger bazaars of the capital and the provincial towns - something that seems to indicate that foreign magic is considered more effective than local magic.

But apart from *djardu* a woman has no means other than the loyalty and support of her sons, when they grow up, and the resources of her own personality, to influence and seek to better her life-situation. As already mentioned, the resort of going back to her own agnates, which is so commonly used among other Middle Eastern groups (cf. Rosenfeld, 1960, p. 67), is usually closed to her, or it can at most be used as a very temporary device; there is no going back.

In many respects the life of the Pakhtun woman is hard. Often she has few opportunities for personal happiness and satisfaction of psychological needs for closeness and tenderness apart from her relations with her children, and possibly from friendships with other women. This is why friendships

(*dostan*) mean very much to women. It may also be an additional strong motive for women to have children, apart from the motivation that springs from cultural emphasis on the mother-role, and the security it gives to a woman to provide her husband and his agnatic family with the sons that are so important to them.

Marriage is considered an absolute imperative for all members of society, since it is the foundation of the domestic units that in turn provide the framework for fulfilment of basic needs for food, sex, child-care, and child-raising. Practically all members of Pakhtun society get married somehow, even ugly or debilitated women.

Many men, particularly older men who already have wives and grown sons, and who can afford it, will marry young girls for pure sexual pleasure. But for women there is generally very little expectation of marital happiness in the Western sense. Yet, especially in the beginning of my fieldwork when I was not so familiar with the women, I was often presented with an image of marriage that was similar to our own Western ideas: 'Husband and wife always love each other'.

As soon as it came to realities, however, the tone was completely different. "I am neither unhappy nor happy about my marriage' (*de wardə-me na kharapa na khushala yəm*) was the statement by a young bride some weeks before her marriage. It was implied that she did not care - after all she had to be married to someone, so what did it matter who the bridegroom was? This attitude was generally confirmed by the other women. On her wedding day the bride weeps the whole day, until she is carried off by the groom's relatives. This may be partly ritual - brides are always expected to cry when leaving their paternal household, their mother and their sisters. But it also has a very genuine basis since the bride is being separated from her relatives and given away to a man she hardly knows, and - unless she is going to marry a close relative - to an uncertain future in an alien household.

If the bride and groom are of approximately the same age and social circumstances, and are otherwise normally healthy and good-looking, it often happens that the marriage turns out to be a harmonious companionship over the years. On the other hand, there may be a large age-difference between the spouses, as often happens in arranged marriages. The difference may be as great as 30-40 years, the husband being normally, but not always, the senior. (In levirate marriages, a wife may be older than her husband). In such cases the expectations of marital happiness on the part of the girl are very small. In marriages of this kind, which are quite common, the women is likely to resort to extramarital love-

relations, or at least to expressing her feelings through the *landays* - even if it entails a great risk to her.

GOR - THE GRAVE

Death (or a compensation in women) is the sanction generally applied where women are concerned, in order to wipe out shame and restitute the balance and equality that is the essence of the Pakhtun concept of *badal* (equality, also meaning revenge). In particular it is considered indispensable in cases of violations of honour through adultery or elopement. Such acts are utterly shameful since they imply that the male household head is not master of his house and his women. Thus it does not have to be a question of actual adultery; public suspicion and slander is enough to shame the family name. Even if the woman is only seen looking at a man, or talking to him, or just happens to be present alone at the same place as a man, it gives ground to people's speculations and can consequently be considered as adultery. At least in those cases where the suspicions and the potential of shame are public, the husband is obliged, through the code of honour, to kill his wife. And so he generally does.

It is worth noting, however, that in cases of adultery killings the husband also has to kill the presumed lover, in order to prove that it really *was* adultery. Otherwise there will be ground for speculation as to whether he may have had other, more personal, motives for killing his wife. This of course would enrage his in-laws, the agnates of the wife. Doubtless many wife-killings masked as punishment for adultery are precisely the result of personal antagonisms developing in the context of arranged marriages, and particularly so in marriages that have been arranged between two conflicting families in order to settle the conflict. Many of these marriages certainly continue the opposition in the form of antagonisms between the spouses.

In the case where a married woman would want to make contact with a man other than her husband, she would consequently do so at a very heavy risk. If she is found out, or if suspicions arise, she will be almost certain to suffer death. So it seems that the proverb quoted in the beginning of the article was right. The ideal Pakhtun woman keeps within the house, she observes *purdah*, and she never taints the family honour through adultery. If she does, the grave awaits her.

Despite the severe sanctions to deviations from the existing ideals, Pakhtun women are not always afraid of breaking the norms - and taking the risks involved - if it

can open for them a possibility of enlarging or transgressing their restricted scope of personal happiness. Though they are not allowed to meet strange men, they sometimes actually do so. This fact has even grown to be institutionalized through the notion of *godər* (the meeting-place).

GODəR - THE MEETING PLACE

A central theme in the poetry of love is the place where the women have the opportunity to meet men from the outer world, when they go out to fetch water. It may be a spring or a convenient place at the river or irrigation canal. If possible, a place shielded by trees or bushes is preferred, so that the women may be protected against the eyes of the public world in their ventures outside the house. As a further precaution against the breaking of *purdah* it is a general custom that the women, or at least the sexually mature ones, do not go to fetch water until dusk. But, at the same time as going for water at the *godər* may be hazardous to *purdah* and to a woman's reputation in public gossip - and for precisely the same reasons - it also means a temporary escape for the women who are otherwise more or less strictly confined to their homes.

Women and men, unmarried or married, may meet and talk, getting to know each other, in the relative privacy of the *godər*. Doubtless many marriages have been initiated in this way, despite the established Pakhtun ideal of marriages being arranged by the parents. An interesting aspect of Pakhtun norms in this context is the generally shared view that a young couple in love should be allowed to marry each other. If it is known in the community that a young girl is in love with somebody it would be considered shameful for her father to marry her to another man - even though the young people are of course not supposed to know each other. This, in my view, is a clear illustration of the conflicting values existing in Pakhtun society: the set of values embodied in *Paktunwali*, based on honour, self-control, and male control; and its opposite, romantic and passionate love breaking the rules of society.

But also many married women (and of course men) seek excitement and emotional release from prosaic or perhaps unhappy marriages in romantic love-affairs, initiated and encouraged at the *godər*, and protected by the solidary discretion of the other women. In fact this is an established cultural pattern to such an extent that the term for 'a place to fetch water' (*godər*) is synonymous with the term for 'meeting place'. However, it must be noted that the *godər*

in its symbolic sense as the place of rendezvous between the sexes, does not always have to be taken in its literal sense. The secret meetings and encounters can also take place in many other localities, provided that they can shelter the couple. Women do leave the home, for visits to neighbouring households, sometimes for journeys further away in order to visit relatives in other villages; or for helping in the fields, as is the case in poorer farmers' and tenants' families. While these excursions are often supervised by the men of the household, and for young women's part by their mother-in-law, they, as well as the fetching of water at the spring or the river, are legitimate excuses for getting out, meeting other women - and meeting men. I was told that the fields, the gardens, and even the rooftops were common places of secret encounters, especially after the onset of the all-enveloping darkness.[11]

This culture of secret love and meetings at the *godər* is reflected in the *landays* - as e.g. the following *landay* shows:

If you really love me then come to the godər
Then with my hands I shall fill my water-jar slowly, slowly.

If you really love me you should hire the godər
Where the young girls sit when they come to fetch water.

Landays may express tenderness and love in a very simple form:

Just place your hand on my hand
For long I shall think of how we placed our hands on each other.

But they can also be extremely passionate, expressing initiative and strong desire on the part of the woman:

I love! I love! I do not hide it. I do not deny it
Even if they cut out my beauty-spots with their sharp daggers.

Come and sit beside me, my beloved!
If shyness prevents you from taking me in your arms,
I shall take you in mine.

Isn't there one daring man in this village?
My flame-coloured trousers are burning my thighs!

As women are ideally confined to the domestic sphere of the house, everything related to them is identified with the house (*kor*). This is also reflected in language: one term for sexual intercourse is *korwalay*, meaning something belonging to the house.

But the *landays* never sing about marital love. In fact, when the husband is referred to, it is in derogatory terms. He is called *mozigay*, 'The Little Awful One'.

Oh my God! Again you send me your dark night
And again I tremble from head to feet, because much
against my will, I have to lie down in the bed I hate.

My beloved! Jump into my bed, don't be afraid!
If it breaks, the Little Awful One will repair it!

However, contempt and ridicule can also be applied to the lover:

Come and embrace me, don't fear the danger.
If you are killed, so what?
Men always die from love of a beautiful woman.

As the last example indicates, the notions of honour and shame still figure in the universe of women's *landays*. This is still more clearly illustrated by the following one that focuses on honour and bravery:

My lover fled from the battle.
Now I regret the kiss I gave him yesterday.

The *landays* also show an awareness and acceptance of *death* as the inevitable fate of mortal beings, and particularly as an everpresent possibility for the women who transgress Pakhtun norms:

My beloved! Come and sit beside me for a moment.
Life is like the dusk of a winter's evening.
It passes so quickly.

The grave has fallen in, the rocks are scattered.
My beloved has turned to dust
And the wind of the plains carries it far away from me.

So it appears from the *landays* presented here that Pakhtun women not only challenge and transgress the norms of Pakhtun society by demonstrating active sexuality; and by negating the honour of their husbands through escaping their control.

It is also clear that the central concept of honour is not discarded. How can we understand this apparent contradiction, and its relation to the contradiction we have seen to exist between women's competition and women's solidarity?

Both contradictions are rooted in the basic household structure of Pakhtun society, and the close relation between family household and family honour. The family honour expresses the autonomy of the household unit in society, and its equal standing in relation to other households. The status and prestige deriving from its autonomy and equality is shared by all the family's members, although it is represented in the outer world through its male household head. Consequently the women of the family also have an interest in loyally supporting the family position and honour as against other households, which includes also the women of other households. The concept of family honour thus cuts across the division and hierarchy of the sexes, and unites the domestic unit. Women are split by the solidarities of households.

As we have seen, they are further split by the internal competition of the domestic groups. But this competition is the result of women's dependance on the men of the household. It could then be expected that precisely this common fate of being dependant and controlled would create a female solidarity cutting across the divisions of households and class, uniting women against men in a 'women's resistance'. And, in some respects, this is just what happens. Women *are* loyal to each other in the matter of love affairs. The *landays* express women's revolts against male control of their bodies, in a form that is completely legitimate in the women's world. Thus *landays* can be seen as the expression of a women's sub-culture among the Pakhtun - a 'culture of love'.

However, there are two interesting characteristics of this 'culture of love'. One is the fact that the ideal of romantic love which plays such a great role in the universe of the *landays*, is also shared by men! And secondly, there are limits to women's internal mutual loyalty within their sub-culture. These limits are the very same that delimit the interests of one household unit against the rest of the world. It means that generally the women do not tell on each other, but in cases where interests in the same man are in conflict between two groups of women from different households, the family loyalty prevails over women's solidarity.

This is illustrated by a case from our fieldwork, in which a young man from one family started to court a young girl from another family. He was already married, but his wife had born him no sons after four years of marriage. And since he needed sons to continue his line, support him, and inherit

CONFLICTS OF SOLIDARITY IN PAKHTUN WOMEN'S LIVES

Inger W. Boesen

'A Woman is best either in the house or in the grave' *(Khadza ya po kor-ke xa-da ya po gor-ke).*

The idea that 'woman's place is in the home' could hardly be expressed more clearly than by this Afghan Pakhtu proverb.[1] It conveys the image of women as controlled beings who should stay at home, work, and bear children for the continuation of their husband's lineage. If the woman breaks the rules of the game, her life is worth little - her husband is entitled to kill her. In short, she is in crucial respects considered as an object belonging to the patriarchal family of first her father and later her husband.

The proverb reflects a form of male society and male control that is largely shared with the other Muslim societies in the Middle East and North Africa. Men dominate the 'public' sphere,[2] the economic, political, and social life outside the household; and women lead a retired existence confined to the domestic realm of home and family. This is also the image that society strives to present of itself, an image to a great extent delivered by men to men, but also basically shared by the women themselves.

However, at the same time the women hold another divergent view of their situation which is expressed in the form of an oral poetry that exists as 'folk ballads' or is composed spontaneously for a specific occasion. This poetry is called *landays*. *Landays* are always sung, accompanied by the women's instrument, the tambourin (*tsamba*), and the singing of *landays* is only performed when no men are near. *Landays* exist only among the Pakhtun.[3]

A rich literature exists in Pakhtu,[4] its main themes being epic ballads of war and heroic deeds, and of romantic love - an ideal that is shared by both women and men. The most famous of the last genre is probably the ballad of Adan Khan and Dulkhanei that in its basic ideas is related to famous classical European poems such as Pyramus and Thisbe, or Romeo and Juliet. There also exists a host of proverbs in Pakhtu, the *tappa*.

Landays have the standard form of two-lined stanzas, the verses of which do not have to rhyme. However, the last line always ends on *-na*, if necessary by means of an attached suffix. The *landays* can roughly be divided into seven categories, according to their theme: nature; love and beauty;

his land, he wished to marry again. He started meeting the girl secretly at the *godər*, and soon the women of the girl's household got wind of the matter. They began to invite the young man into the *kala* when the men were out; they served him delicacies and allowed him to sit and talk with the girl - something that would be considered outrageous if it came to the knowledge of the men of the family.

But the women of the kin-group of the young man's wife were enraged and embittered at this treason on the part of the women of her rival's group, against the poor childless wife. They informed her of what was going on. The men of the implied households were not informed however; the affair was kept completely within the women's sphere.

This example illustrates clearly the contradiction between women's solidarity and women's opposed interests in the same men.

The *landays* are a structured and established expression of a Pakhtun women's counter-ideal since it operates with norms and ideals that are divergent from those of the dominant culture (female initiative and sexuality). On the other hand, the utopia of romantic love is shared by both sexes, and as such not exclusive to women.[12] Nevertheless the realization of this ideal means a transgression of norms that at least for women implies a complete negation of their conventional role. In this context women act as social subjects, not passive objects, who transgress the limits of the 'private' sphere - *kor* - through interaction with the outside world. The 'culture of love' supports women's solidarity in their strivings to break male control of their persons and obtain a little happiness for themselves in a relationship with a man of their own choice.

But, like other structured women's cultures in the Middle East (cf. Tapper, 1968 and 1978), the Pakhtun women's culture constitutes no basic challenge to the existing male-dominated society. It is no collective women's 'revolt', and no counter-culture as such. However, it does provide an outlet and a recognized way for women as individuals to seek relief from their strictly controlled life-situation. By questioning their husband's control of their bodies, they question the honour of particular Pakhtun men. In this way Pakhtun women could be said to use the men's ideology against them as individuals. But the women's dilemma of loyalties still exists, because the fundamental concepts of this very ideology - honour in general, and family honour - are not basically questioned.

NOTES

1 Fieldwork was carried out in Kunar, East Afghanistan, during the period between autumn 1977 and August 1978. It was made possible by a grant from the Danish Research Council for the Humanities, to whom I express my thanks. Fieldwork was conducted in co-operation with Asger Christensen, my husband, to whom I am deeply indebted for support and fruitful discussions throughout the work-process and the preparation of this paper. I also thank Susan Whyte, and Jon Anderson, for stimulating discussions and useful comments. Last, but not least, I thank Dr. Majrouh and S. Shpoon of Kabul, and the women of Votapur, Kunar, who received me as a sister and tried their best to turn me into a *Pukhtanā*.

2 The concepts of *public* and *private* are used in this paper as a shorthand for 'male' world outside versus 'female' world inside the intimate domestic circle of the house since the equations between public/male and private/female are adequate in this particular ethnographic setting. I am aware of the limitations of the concepts as used as a general anthropological model in any human society, cf. the critiques by C. Nelson (1974) and S.L. Skar (1979).

3 General descriptions of Afghan Pakhtun can be found in Christensen (1980) for Kunar and Anderson (1975) for the Ghilzai to the south of Kabul.

4 Pashtu/Pakhtu is spoken in two main dialects, the soft by the Western tribes mostly living in Afghanistan, and the hard by the Eastern tribes living in the border regions between Afghanistan and Pakistan, thus also in Kunar, and the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan.

5 See my article in *Folk*, 1980, for a description of the differences between Islam and Pakhtunwali in relation to women's rights. The three main issues are the question of marriage and divorce, women's rights to control property, in marriage and by inheritance; and women's right to participate in the public religious life.

Apart from the specific issues concerning the deviance of Pakhtun practice from *Sharīá* law there exists a fundamental incompatibility between the two that involves a rejection of the basic content in *Sharīá* law. While the Pakhtun tribal system is based on the obligation of the aggrieved party to assert and re-establish his honour and social integrity by demonstrating his ability to take revenge or get compensation, *Sharīá* law emphasizes the punishment of the offender because he has violated its authority. What is involved here is the incompatibility of a tribal system where conflict-regulation and sanctions are geared towards restoring the *balance* and equilibrium between the involved parties, and a system of law which

presupposes an outside authority (a state) inflicting punishment on the offender. The implications of this relationship between Pakhtun tribal organization and *Sharīʿa* law are many and important, but fall outside the scope of this paper. (Cf. Ghani, 1978).

6 Cf. the phrasing of honour as the family's 'symbolic patrimony' by an anthropologist working in a tribal society, the Berber, in which the concept of honour is very similar to that of the Pakhtun (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 40 et al).

7 This discussion of relations of *objective* control is not the same as the one of *subjective* control: do the Pakhtun women *feel* controlled; do they conceive of themselves as being deprived of self-determination, and as being objects? In short, do they *feel* 'oppressed'? - It is important to note the existence of two sets of questions to ask concerning the 'position of women' in any given society: the etic, structural-objective point of view, and the emic, subjective-ideological. Finally one must beware of using the concept of 'oppression' indiscriminately without analysing its substantial contents within the framework of an empirical study of the possibilities and limitations of all members of the given society.

8 Pakhtun women never own land, despite the injunctions of *Sharīʿa* law in respect of female inheritance (cf. note 5). This must be explained partly by the fact that Pakhtun women are considered as controlled objects whose identity is subsumed under that of their father or husband and consequently are unable to control anything themselves. Partly it may be based in the patrilineal kinship structure in which rights to land are maintained and passed on through agnatic links. In this structure women leave their agnatic group at marriage; their children will often belong to another agnatic group, and are therefore considered as 'strangers'. This is comparatively suggested by the analysis by G. Tillion (1966, p. 27) of female property control in Muslim North Africa, where she shows that 'la destruction des tribus coincide avec la dévotion. - dans l'Islam, en effet, la destruction des tribus est en relation directe avec l'observance religieuse parce que la loi coranique exige que tous les fils héritent une part du bien paternel, et toutes les filles une demi-part; la loi religieuse est de ce fait deux fois meurtrière pour les charpentes tribales . . .'

9 For a further discussion of Pakhtun marriage strategies in Kunar see paper by Boesen & Christensen. 'Marriage, Class, and Interest: Patterns of marriage among Pakhtun in Kunar, North-East Afghanistan', *Folk,* 1982.

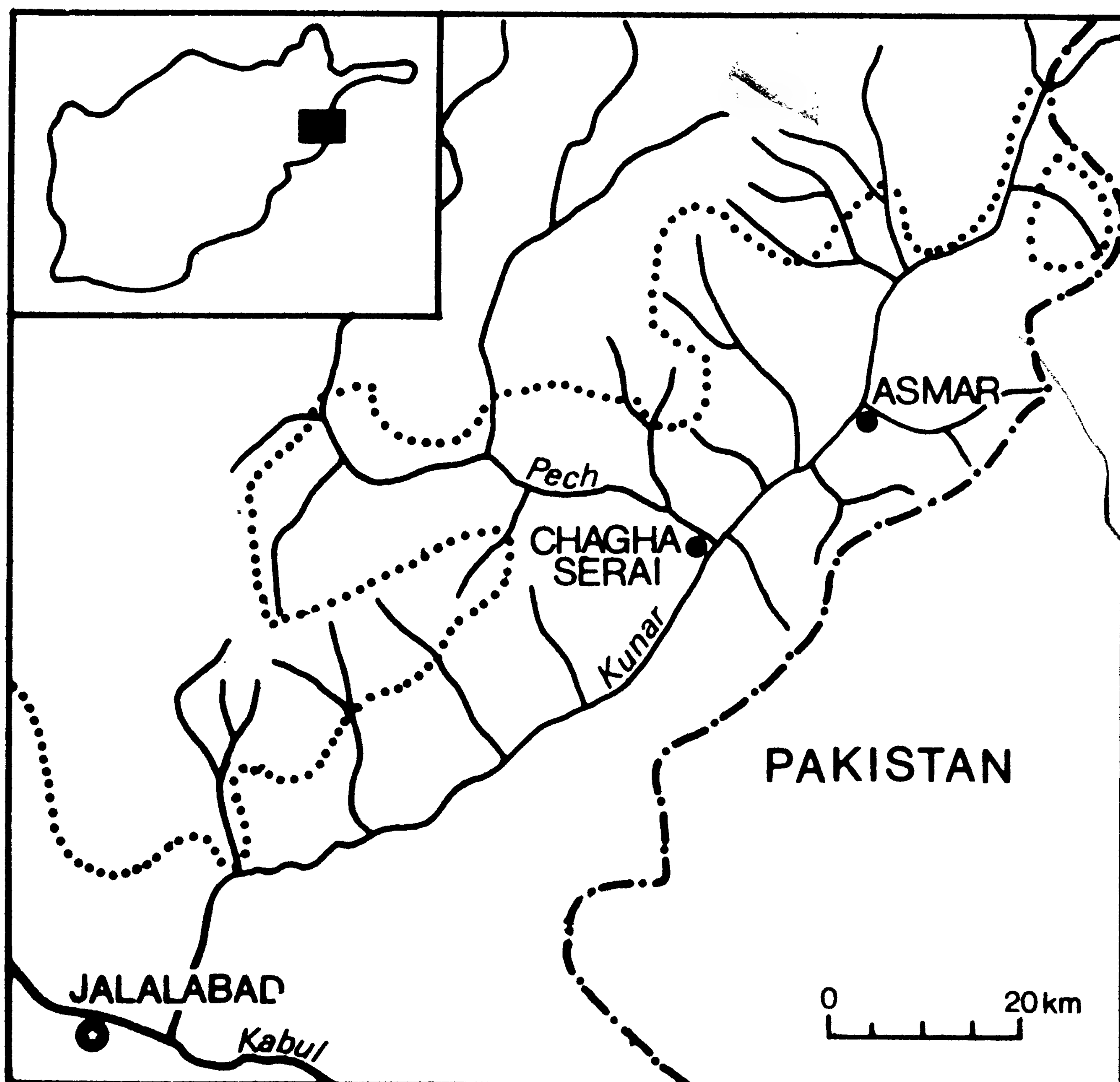
10 Cf. Hannah Papanek: Purdah as 'Separate Worlds and Symbolic Shelter' (Papanek 1971 and 1973).

11 In the nature of the matter, the actual frequency of extra-marital sexuality is something that is extremely difficult to verify. Nevertheless two cases took place during our fieldwork, both ending in killings. Apart from these, the women of the villages told me much of its occurrence, and about the ways and opportunities of meetings. This fact, as well as the themes of the *landays*, at least reflect a strong wish on part of the women to oppose the system that deprives them of any initiative in the matter of sex.

12 A similar pattern of love-songs and extra-marital love-affairs exists among the Marri Baluch (Pehrson & Pehrson, 1966, ch. V).

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BO UTAS (ed): WOMEN IN ISLAMIC SOCIETIES - SOCIAL ATTITUDES AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES
Scandinavian Inst. of Asian Studies.
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The dotted line separates the Pashtu-speaking area on the one hand and the Dardic and Nuristani speaking areas on the other. The Pashtuns live east and south of the dividing line. (Based on map in R. Strand: Notes on the Nuristani and Dardic languages. Journal of the American Oriental Society, vol, 93, no. 3, 1973.)

honour; heroic deeds; social conflicts and tragedies; parting and separation; death, and the transitoriness of human life.

The *landays* as such are not exclusively a women's poetry - but on the other hand the women's *landays* are a specific form of this poetry, expressing a consciousness which in certain respects does not correspond to the dominant tenets of the overall ideology as defined by the Pakhtun men.

Landays and a 'Women's Culture'

The possible existence of a women's culture among the Pakhtun requires a discussion of the dilemma of Pakhtun women that is rooted in their simultaneous adherence to the dominant ideals of Pakhtun society and their divergent consciousness and activity as it is expressed in the *landays*.

On a general level, the dilemma is the same that exists for most, if not all, actors and participants of social systems. It is the problem of adapting and manipulating social norms and ideals to accommodate individual goals within the framework of possibilities and constraints defined by the social structure. This is played out constantly in the process of daily living, and it entails what has been termed 'the art of necessary improvisation' (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 8). Individual members of a society always have a particular subjective conception of the general ideals and norms of society according to their specific vantage point, and the interests that spring from it. Some groups, however, may have interests that conflict with those of other groups. The particular ideology of a group may be in accordance with the general ideology confirming its basic tenets; but it may also reflect the group's specific ideology in protesting against the general, 'dominant' ideology. In the case where a particular group is considered as somehow set apart from or subordinate to some other group or groups in society - as in the case of Pakhtun women in relation to Pakhtun men - the ideology of the group may accept this view of itself by the dominant culture, accepting its own subordinate position or its character of being 'something apart'. In that case the ideology of the sub-group, the sub-culture, does not challenge the dominant culture, even if it may contain elements of deviance from it. Rather it has the effect of adapting the sub-group to the total social system with all its differences - thus allowing the social system to reproduce its relations of dominance and control.

On the other hand, the sub-group may develop a particular consciousness and a way of expressing this consciousness that outright rejects the existing social order by challenging

its boundaries and its dominant ideological structures. In the case of a group that is considered subordinate and that is in some way dependent on the dominant group, this alternative consciousness may include the rejection of dominance and control. This type of sub-culture would constitute a 'counter-culture' - a sub-culture which is in opposition to the dominant culture, not subordinated by it (Pizzorno, 1970, p. 57).

The dilemma of the Pakhtun women as social actors is not only the general dilemma inherent in the relation between ideology and individual practice, but the specific dilemma defined by two sets of ideology reflecting conflicting interests - one being their interests as members of Pakhtun society, the other their interests as a subordinate group, 'women' - in the sense that concept is defined by Pakhtun society - in relation to the controlling group 'men'. In other words, their dilemma is that of being both Pakhtun and women.

Male Honour and Male Control

Pakhtun ideals are expressed in a set of norms and codes of behaviour centring on *male* honour and autonomy that is conceived as 'doing Pakhtu' (*Pakhtu kavəl*), often termed *Pakhtunwạli* in the literature. *Pakhtunwali* is closely articulated with Islam in Pakhtun consciousness, and on the whole the two systems mutually reinforce each other, combining to form the dominant ideological matrix. However, it is important to note that on certain points - which are known to many Pakhtun - *Pakhtunwali* and Islam disagree, and some of these points have a crucial effect on the actual situation of Pakhtun women. In these matters Islam generally gives way to what is considered as 'doing Pakhtu'.[5]

Honour is *the* essential part of the Pakhtun's self-image, and male Pakhtun honour is closely connected with the men's control of the women in their household. The Pakhtun say that the honour of the family is embodied in the honour of its women; the maintenance of family honour requires control over and protection of the women on a par with that of the house, property, and land, all of which are subsumed under the same concept of honour - *namus*.[6] Pakhtun women also share this code of honour, and they themselves endeavour to merit the name of *Pukhtana* by leading an honourable life in accordance with the standards of *Pakhtunwali*. And through this they also accept the dominant cultural view of women as inferior and subordinate to men.

But at the same time women's divergent consciousness, as expressed in the *landays*, in many ways rejects this male control of their persons, proposing instead a model of women's management of their own bodies and their emotional life.

By presenting an alternative conception of women as active social subjects it denies the view held by the dominant ideology of women as being passive controlled objects. In this way the women's 'counter-image' actually implies a rejection of honour as it is articulated with the Pakhtun conception of sex roles, since it negates male control.

But, are then Pakhtun women really controlled, or is it all something that the men pretend? If they are, what are then the structures and mechanisms of control, and how are they related to the structures and mechanisms of Pakhtun society as a whole? How inclusive is the control - does it leave the women any room for independent action?

In Pakhtun society the image presented by the dominant ideology of women being subordinate to and controlled by men, is by and large correct.[7] Of course this is characteristic only on the level of general social relations; on the individual level there may be variations according to specific constellations of personalities within the family, and particular types of family situations.

Pakhtun men control Pakhtun women's lives in two decisive respects: the control of property and subsistence, and the control of marriage.

The male control of means of subsistence is based on their control of land and other vital productive resources,[8] and on their monopoly of all jobs in connection with trade and services, since these are in the 'public sphere' from which women are excluded. The only type of work that is left for women is processing and preparing the, mainly agricultural, products from the joint resources of the household, and possibly (in families of tenants and small farmers) helping in cultivating its land. In this way, she, too, is actively involved in the household economy of her husband (or father, if she is unmarried). But this does not mean that the notion of male control of resources is a mere ethnocentric legal projection of 'private ownership' from the culture of the anthropologist. The Pakhtun male household head controls the family's property in relation to his dependants as well as against the world. In principle, and in most cases also in reality, his powers of allotting or denying shares of the family resources to its members, including his wife or wives, are absolute. A woman has to ask her husband for everything. Only the occasional petty selling of eggs or butter to other households, or bartering them in the local

shop, can provide the housewife with a little 'pin money' or some small articles she needs.

The other aspect of control that men exercise - or strive to exercise - over women is the control of marriage. This means control of the women's bodies - their sexuality as well as their reproductive capacity. Both aspects of the men's bodily control of women seem to be important, since it is not only the procuring of offspring, mainly sons, that men desire, but in equally high degree their exclusive rights to the women's 'sexual services' which also guarantee the genealogical purity of their descendants. It is expressed in the close identification between male honour and male control of the virginity or fidelity of the women of their household.

Men's sexual control of women is realized through the system of arranged marriages where male household heads exchange women and bride-prices, thereby in fact controlling the marital fates of women as well as that of younger men (sons, and sometimes younger brothers and nephews).

These two dimensions of male control and female lack of self-determination constitute the basic conditions of women's existence. A woman has ultimately no rights of her own. She cannot own land or other resources with which to provide for herself and her children. She has no possibility of choosing her own partner for sex, companionship, and personal happiness. In this her fate is ultimately different from that of the young men, because they have the possibility, if they are not content with the spouse their father has chosen for them, to negotiate another marriage according to their wish later in life - if and when they can afford to pay another bride-price. Divorce, however, is out of the question to both sexes as a solution (a point to which I shall return).

Women's situation is difficult, in a social system that in crucial respects cuts short their possibilities of independent action and self-determination. They are considered as dependent objects to be controlled and exchanged, and in most cases they are constrained, by the force of society, and the physical force of the men of their household, to act accordingly. But, as we shall see, against the force of society may stand the force of love.

The Patrilineal Family Household

The family household forms the primary social, economical, and political frame of Pakhtun life. It constitutes the basic unit of production and management, and is also considered the fundamental unit of solidarity and cooperation.

Cultivated land is owned as private property. The household may own and cultivate its own land, or it may rent its land to tenant families, or it may itself rent land, or additional land, from a land-owner.

Households and descent-groups are based on patrilineal descent where each household through its senior male member is placed within a ramified descent system ideally comprising all Pakhtun. The family is always 'patriarchal' with the senior male as the household head representing the family to the outside world, and possessing the ultimate rights of decision concerning the allocation of resources and their distribution internally. It is also patrilocal (or virilocal), and at the wedding the bride moves into the family of the bridegroom, where she and her husband will get a separate room in the house. Otherwise a new house may be built adjoining the old one within the walled compound (*kala*), or the couple may occasionally settle somewhere else.

The family may be either a nuclear family or an extended family. Its actual form varies according to the stage of family development, and according to whether the household is polygynous or not. An average extended household consists of a man (the head of the household), his wife or wives, and their sons and unmarried daughters, the wives and children of the married sons, and maybe some old relative, most often the mother of the household head. In some cases, mainly but far from exclusively within the landowning class, the household is also polygynous - the household head or one or several of his sons having more than one wife. When so, each of the wives has her own room, if the house is large enough, or some of the women share rooms.

Marriages (*wardə*) are arranged for the daughters and sons of the household by their parents. Although the elder women's assistance is important in locating suitable brides for their sons, providing valuable information about them through the women's information network, and often conducting initial negotiations with the girl's family, the male household heads have the ultimate right of decision in the arrangement of marriage matches.

This must be understood in terms of the importance of marriage as an element in the social network of the local groups, both in confirming newly established relations of friendship and alliances, and in reaffirming old ones.[9] A marriage match implies an exchange between the wife-giving and the wife-receiving family. Women are exchanged against a bride-price (*walwar*); in rare cases women can be exchanged directly without *walwar*. This form of marriage is called *badaley*, a term which conveys the concept of equality and balance (*badal*). *Walwar* usually amounted to between

20,000-40,000 Afghanis (in 1978 roughly equalling $600-1,200, $1 being approx. 35 Afghanis). Among tenants and occupational groups, however, *walwar* is often lower and may be down to about 6,000 Afghanis.

Being an outright bride-price, *walwar* is in disaccord with Islam. Islam operates in principle with another type of bridal-payment, the *mahr*, which is a gift from the groom's family to the bride herself. Thus in fact it constitutes an 'indirect dowry' in Goody's terminology (Goody & Tambiah, 1973, p. 20). *Mahr* is considered as the bride's personal property, to ensure her (partial) economic independence through marriage and in case of divorce, whereas a bride-price like the *walwar* that goes into the hands of the bride's father, is considered immoral according to Islam on account of its character as a buying-and-selling transaction. *Mahr* figures only formally, if at all, since there is no divorce from Pakhtun marriages in Kunar. Apart from *mahr* and *walwar* a dowry figures in marriage transactions. This dowry (*kali*) is the trousseau of the bride: equipment for the new home, clothing for the bride as well as a new suit of clothes for the groom, and maybe a radio and a sewing machine. Part of the trousseau is usually bought for some of the *walwar*.

Divorce (*talaq* = repudiation of the wife by the husband) is non-existent among the Pakhtun of Kunar. It would be regarded as so shameful to all implied parties, and would have such profound consequences on social structure in upsetting established alliance ties, that it is never practised. The stability of marriage can be seen as a partial advantage to women, since it gives them security against divorce. But at the same time it cuts them off from the possibility of 'walking out on' a husband who treats them badly or who has taken another wife whom he prefers, as the Pakhtun men do not adhere to the Koranic injunction about treating all wives equally.

In a society like the tribal Pakhtun, a divorced woman would have no means of supporting herself, and, since at marriage all rights to the woman pass from her own agnates to her husband, the possibility of going back to live with them is usually closed. Since it is considered very shameful to give a woman to a lower-standing family, marriages are generally arranged between families of equal social standing; or they are sometimes hypergamous. The implication for the bride is that she has very limited possibilities to use her family's influence to put pressure on her husband to better her situation, since it would set them up against people of either similar or superior social standing - and in any case the natal family of the girl will be reluctant to support

her since it will be shameful for them as it makes public what should be kept private.

In some cases 'going home' (to go back to one's own father's house: *de xpəl plar kor-ta tləl*) may be used as a short-term device to put pressure on a husband, but it is not normally an institutionalized way of retreat for women, for the reasons just mentioned. However, in rare cases where the families of the spouse are of equal standing, it may happen, but the result will be bitter estrangement between the two families involved.

Pakhtun women often expressed their view of the non-practice of *talaq* as a security for them. It means that they are not in danger of being thrown out of the family and being cut off from their children, as is the case in many other Muslim groups who do practice divorce. Consequently Pakhtun families are stable units.

Following this presentation of the social and material existence of Pakhtun women I shall now try to give these outlines a more specific cultural content by describing some of the basic notions of the relationship between women and men. These can be summed up in the Pakhtu notions of *'kor, gor,* and *godər'* (the house, the grave, and the meeting-place or the place to fetch water). The three concepts designate some of the most central physical and social loci of interaction, harmony or conflict between the sexes.

KOR - THE HOUSE

As we have seen, to ' do Pakhtu' and thus to command respect from other members of Pakhtun society, a male Pakhtun has to demonstrate the autonomy and integrity of himself and the household he represents as against others - i.e. other Pakhtun male household heads as well as the rest of the world. The arena where this is acted out is the male world outside the family household, the 'public' world. The household, on the other hand, belongs to the private sphere of men's lives, with all that it contains of satisfaction of elementary personal needs - of bodily as well as of psychological nature. Above all, the private sphere is associated with relations with women and sex, which is considered shameful (*sharm*). Consequently the private and intimate sphere of men's lives, in the physical frame of their house, is something to be protected and guarded from other men; and only by being able to protect and control the family, the house and all it contains including women and children, can Pakhtun men maintain their honour.